

Senator Haskell, Representative Elliott and distinguished members of the committee:

Good morning. I hope everyone is doing well and staying safe. My name is Nicolle Majette and I am a student at Temple University. While I currently live in Philadelphia for school, Connecticut is my home. I live in Trumbull, CT and am a constituent of Representative Marilyn Moore and Senators Richard Blumenthal and Chris Murphy. Today, I am testifying in favor of **HB 6374**, An Act Concerning Sexual Misconduct On College Campuses. While this issue is the sole topic of today's meeting, it is important everyday. Victims of sexual violence have to live with their experiences everyday. They do not get to leave the Zoom call, close their laptop, and forget about what happened. Many have to grapple with their experience with sexual violence every day. Sexual violence is a national epidemic that has impacted my life and the lives of students like me around the country and around Connecticut. This epidemic impacts a higher percentage of our population than anywhere else. And I am one of those impacted students.

While I have not personally experienced sexual violence in my home state of Connecticut, I have been sexually harassed at my own college campus. Unwanted kissing and touching, requests for sexual favors, sexually explicit comments, and catcalls were experiences I did not expect to have within my first year of college. Now, as a third year student, I still hear stories from friends and others who have experienced sexual violence on a college campus. I, myself, still have to brace myself if I'm walking home with a female friend after a night out. Why should I and millions of others have to live in fear in an environment that is supposed to make us feel safe? Many are afraid to speak out, due to fear of being unheard or believed. Some are afraid that no action will be taken against the harasser. We need to do better. With this bill, that fear can be alleviated, and these experiences can be prevented.

A campus climate survey mandate would be very beneficial. It would have better equipped my university with the information and insights to better address sexual violence. Many students, like myself, do not report their experiences, and so the campus climate survey allows students to tell their story in a safe, confidential platform. It will alleviate feelings of fear, worry, and anxiety for countless students who think they have to be silent. These stories then go on to inform universities of the severity of the epidemic at hand, who it impacts, where, and more--which better prepares them to make changes and improve policies. I firmly believe that the provisions in these bills will translate into more comprehensive and enlightened reform efforts. The first step in resolving an issue is to understand it. Having a campus climate survey and the insights it would acquire from students like myself would allow universities to better understand the epidemic of sexual violence.

Also, I want to touch on the necessity of the frequency of a two year survey. I believe this frequency is essential to encapsulating the needs of *all* students in the State. A four year frequency would preclude graduate students and many Associate degree students from participating in this survey and providing their much-needed insights. Additionally, the two year frequency would allow students like me to share our experiences as our college experience is ongoing. For example, under a four year frequency I may only provide my insights during my first year -- not allowing me to provide insights on my subsequent experiences throughout my

years at university. With the already present barriers to reporting and gathering holistic data, this impediment should be of grave concern to members of the General Assembly.

I know that these bills will improve students and survivors lives all across Connecticut, including mine. I know that when these bills pass, our state will be a leader in the country, paving the way to make campuses safer and more supportive places for all students. I will be so proud to live in a state that serves as a beacon of hope for others. Passing these bills will show that change will come, and a better tomorrow will follow. I hope you will join me in believing this. To the legislators here today, you have the power to improve campus safety for all students, please report this bill favorably out of committee.

Thank you all for your time and thank you for hearing my story! Members of the Higher Educational Committee, please vote this bill out of committee as soon as possible.

Nicolle Majette